

Message Text

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TO USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS STATE 125168

FOR DR BENJAMIN BLOOD NIH

FOLLOWING REPEAT DACCA 2975 ACTION SECSTATE INFO NEW DELHI
DATED MAY11, 1978.

QUOTE: UNCLAS DACCA 2975

PASS NIH

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : TBIO, TPHY, BG

SUBJECT : MONKEY EXPORTS

REF: (A) DACCA 2939, (B) DACCA 1964, (C) USINFO 0400337 MAY 78

1. ON MAY 10 EMBOFFS CALLED
AGRICULTURE SECRETARY OBAL-
DULLAH KHAN AND CHIEF CONSERVATOR OF FORESTS ABDUL HAMID TO
DISCUSS BDG'S STANCE ON MONKEY EXPORTS. KHAN SAID THAT AT
PRESENT THE ONLY OPERATIVE CONTRACT FOR MONKEY EXPORTS IS
THE ONE SIGNED BY MOL ENTERPRISES AND THE THEN SECRETARY FOR
AGRICULTURE, FORESTS, FISHERIES AND LIVESTOCK DIVISION, QAZI
JALALUDDIN AHMED IN MARCH 1977. KHAN ACKNOWLEDGED THAT
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THIS CONTRACT GIVES MOL A MONOPOLY ON MONKEY EXPORTS FROM
BANGLADESH. HE POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE TERMS OF THE
CONTRACT, MOL IS ALSO TO BUILD A BREEDING FARM TO SUPPLE-
MENT MONKEYS OBTAINED BY TRAPPING. HE OBSERVED THAT MOL
HAD NOT ACTED ON THIS PART OF THE CONTRACT AND AS A RESULT
MONKEY EXPORTS HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN THE 5,000
MONKEYS PER YEAR PROVIDED FOR IN THE TEN-YEAR AGREEMENT.

2. HAMID ADDED THAT ALTHOUGH THE CONTRACT IS STILL IN EFFECT, MOL ONLY IMPORTED 62 MONKEYS DURING THE FIRST YEAR AND HAS ASKED FOR APPROVAL TO EXPORT ONLY 40 MONKEYS THIS YEAR. HE SAID HE KNEW OF NO PLANS BY MOL TO BUILD A BREEDING FARM IN BANGLADESH AND THAT THERE WAS EVIDENCE THAT MOL WAS "SELLING" ITS EXPORT RIGHTS TO OTHERS. HE REVOKED HIS BELIEF THAT THE LEVEL OF EXPORTS PROVIDED IN THE CONTRACT WOULD QUICKLY DECIMATE THE MONKEY POPULATION IN BANGLADESH AND THAT EXPORTS SHOULD BE HELD TO 1,000 MONKEYS A YEAR. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT HIS STAFF IN THE DIRECTORATE OF FORESTS AND WILDLIFE IS CONDUCTING A SURVEY TO DETERMINE THE ACTUAL MONKEY POPULATION IN BANGLADESH AND AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF MONKEY EXPORTS.

3. HAMID, WHILE DISCLAIMING ANY LEGAL EXPERTISE, EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT THE MOL CONTRACT WAS IN THE NATURE OF A TRADE AGREEMENT AND WAS THUS IN CONFLICT WITH THE BANGLADESH WILDLIFE (PRESERVATION) ORDER OF 1973. THE ORDER PROHIBITS THE KILLING OR CAPTURE OF DESIGNATED WILDLIFE SPECIES INCLUDING RHESUS MONKEYS EXCEPT WHEN THE BDG PERMITS AN EXCEPTION FOR "SCIENTIFIC OR ANY PUBLIC PURPOSE". HAMID THOUGHT THAT SINCE THE MOL CONTRACT WAS PHRASED AS A COMMERCIAL AGREEMENT, IT DID NOT QUALIFY FOR THIS EXCEPTION.

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4. KHAN SAID THE CONTRACT HAD NOT UNDERGONE LEGAL SCRUTINY BY THE BDG AND THAT HE WOULD SUBMIT IT TO THE LAW MINISTRY FOR EXAMINATION. HE SAID IF THE LAW MINISTRY ADVISED MOL HAS NOT CARRIED OUT ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONTRACT, THE BDG MAY TERMINATE THE AGREEMENT AND WITH IT MOL'S EXCLUSIVE FRANCHISE. IN THAT EVENT OTHER EXPORT PROPOSALS WOULD BE CONSIDERED. (NOTE: ANOTHER LOCAL BUSINESSMAN WITH PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE IN MONKEY EXPORTS HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST TO THE EMBASSY IN EXPORTING MONKEYS TO U.S. IF BDG WILL ALLOW EXPORTS BY OTHERS THAN MOL).

5. EMBOFF RAISED NIH'S PREVIOUS INTEREST IN A PRIMATE SURVEY IN BANGLADESH, NOTING THAT THIS PROJECT WAS NOT CONCLUDED BECAUSE THE BDG DID NOT REACH A DECISION ON IT UNTIL AFTER NIH'S BUDGET ALLOCATION HAD EXPIRED. NEITHER KHAN NOR HAMID COMMENTED AND WE DID NOT PURSUE THE MATTER.

6. EMBASSY HAS RECEIVED TRANSCRIPT OF WASHINGTON STAR ARTICLE (REF C) ON TIM (SIC) M. GREEN'S PETITION TO

HAVE BANGLADESH RHESUS MONKEYS DECLARED AN ENDANGERED SPECIES. (NOTE: OUR RECORDS SHOW THAT A KENNETH M. GREEN CONDUCTED A SURVEY OF THE MONKEY POPULATION IN BANGLADESH IN 1976. WE ASSUME HE IS THE "TIM M." GREEN" MENTIONED IN THE STAR ARTICLE.)

WE NOTE THAT IN HIS STUDY, "PRIMATE RESOURCES IN BANGLADESH" (PUBLISHED IN "LABORATORY PRIMATE NEWSLETTER", OCTOBER 1977), GREEN PRESENTED WHAT HE TERMS "PRELIMINARY INFORMATION ON THE STATUS OF PRIMATE POPULATIONS IN BANGLADESH". HE ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HIS INABILITY TO ENTER THE TWO MAJOR FOREST REGIONS OF BANGLADESH -- THE SUNDERBANS AND THE CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS (BOTH OF WHICH ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT

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MONKEY POPULATIONS) -- "REDUCES THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS SURVEY BUT CERTAIN TRENDS AND PROBLEMS ARE STILL EVIDENT". IN LIGHT OF THIS IT WOULD APPEAR THAT FURTHER STUDY OF THE MONKEY POPULATION IN BANGLADESH IS NECESSARY BEFORE ANY DETERMINATION CAN BE MADE REGARDING THE RHESUS' POSSIBLE STATUS AS AN ENDANGERED SPECIES.

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